

MINZIRO FOREST RESERVE: AN ORNITHOLOGICAL NOTE INCLUDING SEVEN ADDITIONS TO THE TANZANIAN LIST

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Minziro Forest reserve is a ground-water forest on the north bank of the Kagera River in northwest Tanzania and is contiguous with the Malamigambo Forest in southern Uganda. It is not listed in the gazetteer of the Birds of East Africa (Britton 1980) and is not mentioned in the text. It is, however, noted by Britton (1978, 1981) as a source of specimens collected by the late Thorkild Andersen. It seems certain that Andersen did not visit the forest personally but that his collector was there from 15 December 1953 to 5 January 1954 and again from 21 February to 17 March 1954. We were unable to trace any written evidence of the forest having been visited by an ornithologist. Sir Hugh Elliott (pers. comm.) visited the forest sawmill in 1939 on a tax-collecting mission but any records he made were destroyed by fire. John Williams (pers. comm.) walked through the forest in 1945 en route to Tabora but did not stop.

In conjunction with work on the Tanzania Bird Atlas, we visited the forest from 6 to 9 December 1984. The camp and net sites were situated at 1°06'S, 31°31'E at an altitude of 1150 m. The forest here retains the boundaries shown on the 1:50,000 map series Y742-3/1, c. 1961, and seemed in excellent condition despite some cutting of *Podocarpus* by poorly equipped local people. Further west, the situation closer to the sawmill is probably more serious. Rodgers (1981) recorded heavy logging as a threat to the population of Black and White Colobus *Colobus angolensis adolfifriederici*, and no doubt the pressures are similar to those in other quasi-protected forests in Tanzania.

This paper details those species deemed of special interest and lists, without comment, others recorded by ourselves and by Andersen. Some of his specimens from Minziro await positive identification. Their museum reference numbers are given at the end of this list. Five of the species listed here are previously unrecorded from Tanzania. However, they are all known from neighbouring Uganda and are therefore not significant extensions of range nor surprising additions to the Tanzania avifauna. Full details of the new species have been supplied to the East African Rarities Committee and are marked with an asterisk in the following list.

SPECIES OF SPECIAL INTEREST

***Circaetus cinerascens* Banded Snake Eagle**

An adult was seen low over the forest. In Tanzania, Britton (1980) records this species from no nearer than Kibondo, 260 km to the south.

***Columba uncinata* Afep Pigeon**

This bird was seen several times in small numbers. Although it was not collected by Andersen, it is known from the Bukoba district of Tanzania.

***Psittacus erithacus* Grey Parrot**

A flock of 19 on 9 December was the only sight record.

***Caprimulgus tristigma* Freckled Nightjar**

A pair was observed calling around a grass-covered rocky hill within the forest.

***Indicator variegatus* Scaly-throated Honeyguide**

Seen on two occasions at the forest edge.

***Oriolus brachyrhynchus* Western Black-headed Oriole**

Recorded by us and by Andersen. Andersen's specimen, listed by Britton (1981), was the first record for the country.

***Remiz caroli* African Penduline Tit**

A pair observed mating close to a recently completed nest provides evidence of breeding outside the months indicated by Brown & Britton (1980).

****Trichastoma albipectus* Scaly-breasted Illadopsis**

An adult caught on 7 December. The olivaceous-brown tips to the feathers of the upper breast were distinctive in the hand. It was otherwise similar to the Pale-breasted Illadopsis *T. rufipennis puguensis* which we know well from ringing studies in the Pugu Hills.

****Bleda eximia* Green-tailed Bristlebill**

This distinctive species was netted on 7 December.

****Phyllastrephus xavieri* Xavier's Greenbul**

One caught in the forest had the following measurements: wing 86 mm, tail 81 mm, bill 22 mm, tarsus 21 mm; it therefore falls at the top end of the size range for males of this species as given by Chapin (1953), Mackworth-Præd & Grant (1973) and our own measurements of specimens in the British Museum (Nat. Hist.). The sympatric and very similar *P. icterinus* (Icterine Greenbul) can also be expected to occur in Minziro.

****Ixonotus guttatus* Spotted Greenbul**

We had several sightings of this conspicuous bird from the forest edge but, rather surprisingly, it is absent from Andersen's collection. Although the species is reported as common in Malabigambo (Britton 1980), it had not been recorded previously from Tanzania.

****Alethe diademata* Fire-crested Alethe**

An adult netted on 7 December.

***Alethe poliocephala* Brown-chested Alethe**

Two birds netted on 7 December were considered to have been of the race *carruthersi*, which occurs in Uganda (including Malabigambo) and western areas of Kenya, but has not hitherto been recorded from Tanzania.

****Sheppardia cyornithopsis* Akalat**

An adult netted on 7 December. The restricted amount of orange on the throat and upper breast helps to separate this species from the similar but montane *S. aequatorialis*. *S. cyornithopsis* is recorded as abundant in Malabigambo (Britton 1980).

***Stizorhina fraseri* Rufous Thrush**

This species was observed twice inside the forest. Hall & Moreau (1970) map a specimen record at Bukoba town, and Bukoba District is mentioned by Britton (1980). However, as the forests south of the Kagera River have virtually disappeared as fuel-wood for the local tea factory, Minziro may well be the only remaining refuge for this species in Tanzania.

***Apalis jacksoni* Black-throated Apalis and *Apalis rufogularis* Buff-throated Apalis**

Several sightings of these birds, often in mixed species flocks. Britton (1980) only records them from Tanzania in Bukoba District.

****Nesocharis ansorgei* White-collared Olive-back**

Two records of this distinctive species confirm the prediction by Britton (1980) of the range extending into northwestern Tanzania.

***Pyrenestes ostrinus* Black-bellied Seedcracker**

The only record of this species in Tanzania is the type of the race 'frommi' Kothe, 1911, from Kitungulu in the southwest of the country, but there have been no subsequent records, although this form occurs in Zambia (Benson *et al.* 1971). Our sightings of this bird presumably refer to the nominate race which is locally common in adjoining areas of Uganda (Britton 1980).

OTHER SPECIES RECORDED

The following species were collected by Andersen (TA) or seen by us (BH). Several of Andersen's specimens are of non-forest birds and may well have been collected some distance from the forest proper, his collector using 'Minziro' as the closest reference point.

Great Sparrowhawk *Accipiter melanoleucus* (TA, BH), African Goshawk *A. tachiro* (TA), Augur Buzzard *Buteo augur* (TA), Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis* (BH), White-spotted Pygmy Crake *Sarothrura pulchra* (TA), Black-bellied Bustard *Eupodotis melanogaster* (TA), Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata* (BH), Tambourine Dove *Turtur tympanistria* (BH), Green Pigeon *Treron australis* (TA, BH), Red-headed Lovebird *Agapornis pullaria* (TA), Black-billed Turaco *Tauraco schuetti* (TA, BH), Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx cupreus* (TA), Black Coucal *Centropus grillii* (TA), Spotted Eagle Owl *Bubo africanus* (BH), African Wood Owl *Ciccaba woodfordii* (BH), Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus* (TA, BH), Blue-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon malimbica* (BH), White-throated Bee-eater *Merops albicollis* (BH), Eurasian Bee-eater *M. apiaster* (BH), Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus* (BH), Little Bee-eater *M. pusillus* (TA), Blue-breasted Bee-eater *M. variegatus* (BH), Black and White Casqued Hornbill *Bycanistes subcylindricus* (BH), Crowned Hornbill *Tockus alboterminatus* (BH), Yellow-spotted Barbet *Buccanodon duchaillui* (TA, BH), Double-toothed Barbet *Lybius bidentatus* (TA, BH), Hairy-breasted Barbet *L. hirsutus* (TA), Spotted-flanked Barbet *L. lacrymosus* (TA), White-headed Barbet *L. leucocephalus* (TA), Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus bilineatus* (TA, BH), Red-throated Wryneck *Jynx ruficollis* (TA), Little Spotted Woodpecker *Campethera cailliautii* (TA), Brown-eared Woodpecker *C. caroli* (TA, BH), Buff-spotted Woodpecker *C. nivosus* (BH), Grey Woodpecker *Mesopicos goertae* (TA), Mosque Swallow *Hirundo senegalensis* (BH), White-headed Roughwing *Psalidoprocne albiceps* (BH), Purple-throated Cuckoo Shrike *Campephaga quisqualina* (TA, BH), Bristlebill *Bleda syndactyla* (TA), Yellow-throated Leaflove *Chlorocichla flavicollis* (TA), Nicator *Nicator chloris* (TA, BH), Brown-backed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas barbata* (TA), White-browed Robin Chat *Cossypha heuglini* (TA), Snowy-headed Robin Chat *C. niveicapilla* (TA), Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* (TA, BH), Kurrichane Thrush *Turdus libyanus* (TA), Masked Apalis *Apalis binotata* (TA), Black-faced Rufous Warbler *Bathmocercus cerviniventris* (TA, BH), Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brachyura* (TA, BH), Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythrops* (BH), Trilling Cisticola *C. woosnami* (BH), Grey-capped Warbler *Eminia lepida* (TA), Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* (BH), White-chinned Prinia *Prinia leucopogon* (TA, BH), Tawny-flanked Prinia *P. subflava* (BH), Moustached Warbler *Sphenoeacus mentalis* (BH), Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* (TA), Green Crombec *Sylvietta virens* (BH), Lead-coloured Flycatcher *Myioparus plumbeus* (BH), Chin-spot Batis *Batis molitor* (TA), Jameson's Wattle-eye *Platysteira blissetti* (TA, BH), Chestnut Wattle-eye *P. castanea* (TA), Wattle-eye *P. cyanea* (TA), Blue

Flycatcher *Erannornis longicauda* (TA), Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone rufiventer* (TA, BH), Dusky Crested Flycatcher *Trochocercus nigromitratus* (TA, BH), Black-headed Gonolek *Laniarius barbarus* (TA), Tropical Boubou *L. ferrugineus* (TA, BH), Fiscal *Lanius collaris* (TA), Mackinnon's Shrike *L. mackinnoni* (TA, BH), Rüppell's Long-tailed Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis purpuropterus* (TA), Splendid Glossy Starling *L. splendidus* (TA, BH), Collared Sunbird *Anthreptes collaris* (TA), Olive-bellied Sunbird *Nectarinia chloropygia* (BH), Bronze Sunbird *N. kilimensis* (TA), Mariqua Sunbird *N. mariquensis* (TA), Olive Sunbird *N. olivacea* (TA, BH), Green-throated Sunbird *N. rubescens* (TA), Scarlet-chested Sunbird *N. senegalensis* (BH), Superb Sunbird *N. superba* (BH), Variable Sunbird *N. venusta* (TA), Green-headed Sunbird *N. verticalis* (TA, BH), Grosbeak Weaver *Amblyospiza albifrons* (BH), Red-headed Malimbe *Malimbus rubricollis* (BH), Yellow-backed Weaver *Ploceus melanocephalus* (TA), Vieillot's Black Weaver *P. nigerrimus* (TA, BH), Black-necked Weaver *P. nigricollis* (TA), Spectacled Weaver *P. ocularis* (TA), Slender-billed Weaver *P. pelzelni* (TA), Compact Weaver *P. superciliosus* (TA), Red-headed Quelea *Quelea erythrops* (BH), Waxbill *Estrilda astrild* (TA), Black-crowned Waxbill *E. nonnula* (TA), Fawn-breasted Waxbill *E. paludicola* (TA, BH), African Firefinch *Lagonosticta rubricata* (BH), Grey-headed Negrofinch *Nigrita canicapilla* (BH), Red-headed Bluebill *Spermophaga ruficapilla* (TA), Black and White Mannikin *Lonchura bicolor* (TA, BH), African Citril *Serinus citrinelloides* (BH), Yellow-fronted Canary *S. mozambicus* (TA).

In addition, T. Andersen collected the following birds (collector's numbers are given) which remain to be identified: *Alcippe* sp. 2156, 2160, *Andropadus* sp. 2161, 2162, flycatcher 2169, and *Neocossyphus* sp. 2173.

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